A

# SERMON

PREACHED

Before the

# King and Queen

AT

# WHITE-HALL,

On *Sunday, Jan.* 8. $169\frac{2}{3}$.

By *WILLIAM WIGAN*, Chaplain to Their MAJESTIES.

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MATTHEW vi. 34. latter part.

*The morrow ſhall take thought for the things of it ſelf; ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

OUR Bleſſed Saviour, who knew that inordinate thoughtfulneſs for the things of this Life was a very common and great hindrance of our Salvation; in this Chapter uſeth many and powerful Arguments againſt it. He ſhews, *ver.* 25. That his Diſciples ought not *to take thought for their Life what they ſhall eat, or what they ſhall drink; nor yet for the body*

*what they ſhall put on; becauſe the life is more than meat, and the body than rayment:* That is, He, who before we had knowledge of wants, gave to Man Being, Senſe and Underſtanding; which are of greater value, and ſhew more power in Him, and goodneſs towards Us, will not deny us the means of Food and Clothing, which are more eaſie for him to grant, as He knows they are neceſſary for us to obtain. Which we may the rather believe, becauſe He hath taken care (as our Lord teacheth, 26, 27, to the 30*th.*) of the *Fowl of the air*, and the *Graſs of the field*, and therefore will ſurely be more mindful of them whom he hath made after his own Image. Chriſt in the 32. *v.* ſhews how fruitleſs alſo this thoughtfulneſs will prove, which cannot add an inch to our Stature, or a minute to our Age. And in the 32. *v.* that the *Gentiles*, (They who have no hope but in this Life, and who are concern'd there ſhould be no other) They place all their happineſs in making proviſion for their ſtay here: But this ſollicitouſneſs ill becomes them who believe they have a Father in Heaven, who knows their wants, and who, if *They ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*, hath aſſured them, that *All theſe things ſhall be added unto them.*

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Since then all Chriſtians have a higher object of their care, the Eternal ſtate of their Souls: of which if they are chiefly mindful, God is ingaged to ſupply what their bodies truly require: No Chriſtian can juſtly complain that the neceſſities of his Life are not ſupplyed, unleſs he have firſt practis'd all that which Chriſt commands: and if any one hath not firſt ſought the Kingdom of God, he hath not yet a title to this Promiſe: But there is little cauſe to fear any ſuch complaints. They that have firſt ſerv'd God uprightly, have not wanted leiſure for their juſt occaſions, and alſo have had a ſpecial bleſſing on their labours. *Godlineſs* hath been *profitable for this life:* and as it hath ingaged men more conſcientiouſly and ſteadily to follow their callings, ſo it hath produc'd excellent fruits to the induſtrious Chriſtian. For the honeſty and fidelity which our Holy Faith teacheth us to obſerve, in our duty towards man in our reſpective profeſſions, as part of our Religion, are virtues of ſuch importance that they ſeldom fail to earn more than daily Bread. For if as the Goſpel enjoyns, we are ſober and temperate; meek and inoffenſive, juſt and charitable; If we are not as Eye-ſervants in our Callings, but ſervants of the Living All-ſeeing God; if we poſſeſs our veſſels

veſſels in Sanctification, and our Souls in patience, waiting for the coming of our Lord: Can we believe that we ſhall want either Bread, or eſteem, or protection in this Life? Are theſe ſo cheap Virtues, that there is no need of them in any Family or Country? Are the oppoſite practices of Vice, of Sloth, of Treachery and Injuſtice, ſo valued and ſo truly profitable to Mankind, that they will procure, if univerſally followed, a far ſurer livelihood than the duties which Chriſt enjoyns his followers to obſerve? Or doth it appear that Epicures and ſenſual Perſons, ſuch as have made their belly their God, and have valued neither Right, nor Wrong, Faith nor Promiſe, Heaven nor Hell, have (generally ſpeaking) been better regarded, and their actions and examples been recommended by Parents and Law-givers, rather than theirs who, looking for a Life to come, have chiefly ſtrove to have a Conſcience void of offence towards God and towards Man? God indeed is pleaſed to ſuffer ſome wicked perſons to proſper by their ſins; but how few are they in reſpect of the vaſt numbers of ſuch as laying aſide all care of their Souls, abandoning themſelves to voluptuouſneſs and idleneſs, to rapine and iniquity, have fallen into poverty, and come to miſerable untimely Deaths?

Deaths? And how few are they who by Prayer recommending their virtuous endeavours to God, have not found his Providence a ſufficient Inheritance?

Therefore in order to a more ready dependance on his Promiſe: As God hath appointed us an uncertain, and it may be a very ſhort ſtay here; ſo he hath not made it neceſſary to have abundance. That we may be the better at leiſure for his Worſhip, and our preparation for Eternity; He hath ſo ordered it, that our Natures do not require ſuch vaſt proviſions, as Covetouſneſs, or the faſhion of the World provoke us to ſeek after. Therefore Food and Rayment convenient are to be had of the growth of all Countries: But they who will fare deliciouſly and ſumptuouſly, and be cloathed to the heighth of their own or their neighbours Vanity: They who ſet not their hearts upon what their health requires, but what others do or wear; They are pierc'd through with many cares: They muſt run great dangers, muſt make ſhipwreck of their Conſciences, muſt be ſlaves to other mens Vices, in order to content their own: And after all, find that Luxury and Pride, and an Evil Eye, are never to be ſatisfied. And theſe are the Men, who when their expectation is not anſwered, rave againſt God's

God's Providence, and queſtion his Love to Mankind, for not giving what they neither truly wanted, nor He ever promiſed to beſtow upon them.

Therefore ſince the Health of the Body, and the Content of the Mind are beſt promoted, by Simplicity of Diet and Moderation in our Deſires: And ſince the obſervation of Chriſt's Precepts tends to the advancement of Peace, Charity and mutual ſupport of Chriſtians in lawful Vocations; juſtly may our Saviour require all who believe in him, after they have done their duty, *to Take no thought for the morrow.* And yet after all theſe Motives, he uſeth Two farther Arguments,

I. *The morrow ſhall take thought for the things of it ſelf.*

II. *Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.*

By theſe Two Conſiderations our Lord ſtrengthens his Prohibition given 25 and 31 *verſes*, and repeated in this *verſe*, whereby we are not to underſtand that we are to be wholly unconcern'd for the future, as reſolved Beggars are, or they who take upon them the Vow of Poverty and Lazineſs, (the peſts of Commonwealths, and burthens

thens of other Chriſtians.) But we are forbid that pining care which neither acquieſces in any, tho' large, proviſion already made, nor in God's Providence. Chriſt doth not forbid Induſtry, nor laying up any ſtore for another day: (For he himſelf had a bag, though *Judas* carried it) But Chriſt forbids that diſtraction and unſatisfiable diſtruſt, which never believes there can be enough heaped up, nor that there is any wiſer care than its own employed and watching over us. For our Holy Faith requires Chriſtians to Work, that they may have wherewith to ſupply themſelves, and give to them that need. It forbids us not to *ſowe or reap, or gather into barns* (as ſome vagabond Monks in S. *Auguſtin's* time interpreted the 26. *ver.*) imitating the Fowles of the Air: But it requires us to believe, that having done what lies in us, we ſhould expect the increaſe from God; knowing that *we live not by bread alone*, however multiplyed, *but by every word that proceedeth out of his mouth*: and therefore we ought not to be thoughtful for the Morrow, otherwiſe than we ſee Servants are who work for Maſters whom they have found juſt and bountiful: They queſtion not their Wages.

*Epheſ.* iv. 28.

*L. de Opere Monachorum, c.* 1.

*Matt.* iv. 4

and are therefore chearfully induſtrious. Much more then ought Chriſtians to baniſh all carking, gnawing, deſpairing Fears, ſince they have already had ſuch experience of God's goodneſs, who hath ſo often filled their hearts with food and gladneſs.

This being premis'd, We may conſider, that we ought,

I. *To take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of it ſelf.*

By the *Morrow* here our Saviour doth not ſtrictly mean the following day, but that time to come in which we may be concern'd. And when he ſaith that to Morrow ſhall take thought for the things of it ſelf, He by a figurative expreſſion ( as is obſerv'd ) ſuppoſeth the time or day to have a perſonal knowledge of what belongs to it: Intimating that as certainly as the days come on, and ſucceed each other, regular in their varieties, and true to their fix'd lengths in their ſeveral ſeaſons: So certainly there ſhall appear the ſame general ſteddy care that hath hitherto watch'd over the works of the Creation, and more eſpecially over the Church of Chriſt: and we can have no more reaſon to doubt of the

the continuance of the ſame Providence in governing the World, than we doubt of the return of Darkneſs or Light, each Day or each Night. If the Day it ſelf were, (as the Heathens imagined the Sun to be) a Deity, or God, it could not more orderly ariſe; then during its revolution will be viſible here an over-ruling Soveraign Power and Wiſdom. And therefore as we expecting the goings out of the Morning and Evening perform, or deſign at leaſt, all the acts that our occaſions may require: as we do not in the leaſt queſtion that *Summer and Winter, ſeed-time and harveſt* will be according to God's Promiſe: *Gen.* viii. 22.

Though all theſe Seaſons may be ſometimes longer or ſhorter, more favourable, or more unkind than otherwhile: As we ſee periods of Life and Governments continue: So we ought not to doubt but that the things of to Morrow, (whether they concern our Bodies or our Souls, our Families or our Countries) will ſucceed as is appointed: They will not happen, as an unſteady blind fortune ſhall confuſedly throw them together. But as hath from everlaſting been decreed by a much wiſer Mind than any we can ſubſtitute in its place.

Some Poets fancy that when Man firſt ſaw the Sun, he was mightily pleaſed at the ſight of ſo glorious an Object, and at its Light ſo charming: But that when he beheld the Sun ſetting, he followed, looking after him as long as was poſſible, and at the diſappearing of the Light, deſpair'd of day again. Though this be but a fiction, it too truly repreſents the practice of too many. The beauty of Order, and the bleſſings of Peace are ſo pleaſing and deſirable, that ſome Chriſtians can no ſooner ſee them overcaſt or withdrawn, but they believe them gone for ever; and lament, as if they could never be reſtored. But as the firſt Man to his unſpeakable Joy ſaw the Sun riſing again where he did not look for him, and afterwards perceiv'd that after darkneſs he would return; after Eclipſes he would Shine out again: So Chriſtians who ſubmit their wills to the Will of God, will to their comfort find that Joy will come after Sadneſs; and that as all the inanimate Beings and Creatures move and act according to the ſimple Eternal Laws which God at firſt ſet down: So Men, with all their folly, and Devils with all their rage can go no farther than was foreſeen, and is permitted: are acted by their own malice, yet execute God's decree, and reign but for a fix'd

a fix'd time. Generations ſhall go, and Generations ſhall come, Trouble and Sorrow ſhall be very great; diſorder ſhall ſeem to have got the full power over the World: But though the Earth be never ſo unquiet, the Lord ruleth over all: And the fiercer and violenter confuſions are, the ſooner they waſte themſelves. Storms may ariſe ſo furious that young Mariners, who never ſaw the like, may imagine Heaven and Earth are quite loſt, and nothing be lookt for but another Chaos. But when He that ſits above, the Antient of Days, ſpeaks the Word, Let there be Light, there ſhall be Light: Let there be Peace, there ſhall be Peace.

They therefore whoſe Faith is founded on this perſwaſion, are beſt ſecured againſt fears and anxieties about the future: Since they are ſure that he who orders the preſent, hath the ſame care of that which is to come, and the ſame power over it: in which belief they are confirmed, by having been diſappointed in former amazements: God having by ways unthought of by Man, reſtor'd ſafety, when all humane help was deſpair'd of. Therefore they caſt their burdens upon him, committing their Souls to him in well doing; not doubting but he who fram'd them, will watch over the work of his hands:

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He who preſerved them during their helpleſs infancy, and heedleſs youth, if they keep in his ways, will be merciful to them, when their ſtrength fails, and when the dayes come in which they have no pleaſure.

Moreover, God hath ſo ordered it, that the Day may be ſaid, in an eſpecial manner, to take thought for the things of it ſelf. For the Day brings with it a diſpoſition of mind ſuitable to its occaſions. Men need not diſtract themſelves with thoughts of what they ſhall do, if ſuch or ſuch Calamities befal them: for time and place and immediate diſtreſs, often ſuggeſt properer Counſels than any could otherwhile have been conceived. Sickneſs of it ſelf inclines the Spirit to a temper fit for that Tryal: it makes it affect that privacy and ſilence which conduce to recovery; and it cauſeth that ſerioufneſs and ſubmiſſiveneſs to advice, which is agreeable to the dangers that attend it. So Neceſſity infuſeth into the Soul that decency of behaviour, that watching of fit opportunities, that courteſie and eloquence of Speech, which no pre-meditation could furniſh, and proves a kind of Inſpiration.

Beſides, There is ſo great variety in the affairs which any day may produce, that the wiſeſt of men cannot foreſee, nor if they could, can they

they provide againſt the evils thereof: and therefore, it *is* obſerv'd, that they miſcarry frequently in weighty concerns of Peace and War, who are ſtrictly tyed up by Commiſſion, and may not act as is plainly beſt, but as they are directed by abſent, though Wiſe, Superiours.

For there are Critical moments, as in diſeaſes, ſo, in all concerns of Life: and the wiſdom of Man conſiſts not ſo much in deep fore-caſt, as in being watchful and ready to lay hold on the preſent advantages. And accordingly God gives his bleſſing, (not to them who by profound thought pretend to fore-tell the deſigns of the Eternal Mind; But) to them who diligently obſerve and improve the opportunities his Providence offers. And therefore the Wiſe are confounded in their Plots, the *Achitophels* are diſappointed in their Counſels, are ſtill baffled by ſomewhat which with all their skill they could not foreſee: God thereby ſhewing that, not the ſhallow and bounded capacity of Man; but an infinite Spirit, only, can comprehend what is to come. For our Body is contained in a very narrow ſpace, and our Spirit moves in a very narrow ſphere. The entrances whereby we admit knowledge are ſtreight, ſuited to our minds, which can perceive but by degrees eaſie, orderly

and

and ſimple; and are overpowered with variety, when not leiſurely offered. And therefore as our Eyes are very ſerviceable, if their objects are preſented ſucceſſively, and in a determined diſtance (beyond which all is obſcure and uncertain.) So that Spirit which God hath plac'd in Man, perceives with much clearneſs what it conſiders ſingly, and what nearly concerns it: But is amazed and in confuſion when it graſps at many things; eſpecially what regards futurities. If therefore Chriſtians will diſtract themſelves with the apprehenſions of what may and what may not happen: if they will extend their ſollicitouſneſs to after Years, and to what as yet lies hid in its Cauſes; They will be convinc'd in time, that their thoughtfulneſs increaſed their Sin, and no way prevented what they feared: and that therefore it is Wiſdom to let the Day take thought for the things of it ſelf; and that the rather, becauſe as our Saviour urgeth for a Second Argument,

II. *Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.*

By *Evil* here is meant, that Vexation and Sorrow, which every day may bring upon us: not that Evil of guilt for which we muſt anſwer.

*Is*

*Is there any evil in the City and the Lord hath not done it?* Saith the Prophet *Amos.* *Amos* iii. 6. He doth not mean any Blaſphemy or Uncleanneſs, any Rapine or Murther: Far be it from God to be the Author of, tho' he for a time permits, ſuch Crimes. But the execution of Vengeance: the Viols of Wrath poured out on Nations in Peſtilence or War, Theſe are appointed by that God, who declares *I make peace and create evil, I the Lord do all theſe things.* *Iſai.* xlv. 7. Foraſmuch then as the heart of Man is on that Evil of Sin continually, which God will certainly viſit with the Evil of Affliction; therefore as ſure as wickedneſs increaſeth, ſo ſurely will Tribulation and ſore Diſtreſs. For as God hath declared he will ſend it: So Vice of its Nature begets miſery and anguiſh of Mind; as it doth ſickneſs of Body, variance with Men, and confuſion in Affairs. For this cauſe, ſince we cannot foreſee That truly Holy Day in which no Sin againſt God ſhall be committed, and by it his vengeance provoked; who can promiſe himſelf that any day ſhall paſs without ſome Viſitation?

The ancient Heathens imagined that every one who entred this Life had a Cup of Good and Evil mingled, given to him: and that though

ſome had a larger meaſure of Sorrow than others, yet none eſcaped without a Doſe of Evil, enough to embitter all their enjoyments: We know from better Authority that, *Man that is born of a woman hath but a ſhort time to live, and is full of miſery*; and that *He is born to trouble, as the ſparks fly upward.* And we may judge by paſt experience, that no particle of our life can paſs, but may have in it vexation ſufficient to diſcompoſe the quiet, and poiſon the comforts of ſo frail and periſhable Creatures as we are. And therefore ſince we are ſo weak and ſo tranſitory and nothing conſumes our ſtrength more than anxious care for the future: It is very unadviſedly done of us to anticipate our Sorrows, which will be grievous enough in their proper time. They who muſt drink up a very nauſeous potion, are not counſel'd to taſte of it often before-hand, and be diſguſted at many parts of that draught which they need but once take, and but once know its offenſiveneſs. Therefore as we eſteem them very indiſcreet, who having plenty for many years, waſte all they have in one riotous entertainment or any momentany voluptuouſneſs: So we may look on them as extremely unhappy, who having allotted them a portion of

Job xiv. 1, 5, 7.

trouble

trouble in this World, which is to be taken by degrees, and at several times, through Fears and jealousies and over inquisitiveness bring all their Evil on themselves at once, and are over-whelmed with a burden, which divided might have been easily supported. If by much thinking and repining beforehand, the sorrow that is feared may be prevented: if by taking the cares that belong to the Morrow on this Day, they are ended; then sollicitousness for the future will be singular Prudence. But (saith S. *Chrysostome*) if you are never so thoughtful for the Morrow, you must nevertheless bear its weight when it is laid on you, and have also the grief of having bore it in vain. Why then do you so greedily gain so great a loss? Why do you give way to Fears, which, like untimely preventive Physick, makes you actually ill, least it may be hereafter you should be so? Be content with what is at present laid on you: that is enough for a Creature who is but of yesterday, and, it may be, will not be here till to-morrow. We know that there is no sort of affliction which befalleth one man, but may befal another: None have any exemption, privilege or prerogative, whereby they are secured against Sickness however painful or loathsome; against disgraces in their per-

ſons or relations, or the ſlanders or violence of wicked Men: No one knows but he may be the next object of pity by ſudden death: For *it is appointed for all men to die*, and no one can tell how ſoon. But how few in health diſquiet themſelves with the apprehenſions of what is moſt certain: and how wretched would they be who ſhould go about ſeriouſly to provide againſt all the caſualties of Life? will they not be diſtracted, who ſhould fear all the Evil they ſee or hear overtakes others unexpectedly: as loſs of Limbs, Senſes, Eſtates, Friends, good Name or Life? And yet we know almoſt all ſort of Afflictions fell upon righteous *Job* in one day in perfection: The *Sabæan*, *Chaldæan* and the Devil, ſeiz'd upon and deſtroyed his Flocks and his Herds: his Sons and his Daughters: and he had only time between, to hear diſtinctly his Loſſes; and then to be ſmitten with Sores from head to foot: and to have all his Sufferings inflam'd by miſerable Comforters. Who is inſured that he ſhall not be oppreſſed or viſited in like manner? And yet ſcarce any are ſo unwiſe as to torment themſelves with the dread of the like.

*Heb.* ix. 27.

S. *James* reproves them who ſay to Morrow *We will go into ſuch a City and buy and ſell and get gain, whereas ye*

*James* iv. 13.

*ye knew not what ſhall be on the morrow: For what is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.* If then we ought not to preſume on the morrow for the contingent enjoyment of what we believe profitable; neither ought we to preſume on it for a contingent evil: As it is ſinful to imitate the rich man in the Goſpel, in promiſing our ſelves long to live, and enjoy the *Goods that are laid up for many Years*; ſince the following Night, or ſooner, our Souls may be taken from us: So it is ſinful for any ſo to concern themſelves for what diſtreſs God may bring upon them, as not thankfully to uſe what they are in poſſeſſion of, and bleſs his holy Name for its continuance. We are not indeed to put off the evil day, and flatter our ſelves that no harm can fall on us: We are not to promiſe our ſelves peace, while God gives ſigns of his near approaching Judgments: But yet we are ſtill to be mindful, that God is the ſame; and that we ſin, by fancying that the Sons of *Anak* are invincible; or by diſtruſting that He can feed us in the Wilderneſs; no leſs than we ſin by ſurfeiting in it of Manna. For ſtill whatſoever the Lord appoints ſhall be *in Heaven and Earth, and in*

*Luke* xii. 19.

*Pſal.* cxxv. 6.

*the*

*the Sea, and all deep places.* He expects we should do what He commands, and leave ſecret things to Him: He loves to be truſted; and we moſt effectually ingage him to watch over us, when, having done what lies in our power, we entirely recommend the Event to Him; firmly believing that it is beſt for us not to know whatever He pleaſeth to conceal from us. For, ſince every day may be unconceivably fruitful of Calamities, which by foreſeeing, or but foreboding, are highly aggravated; it is compaſſion in God to keep hid from us what we are to undergo, and cannot avoid. One of the Ancients ſaith, That he who allow'd a day's ſpace as ſufficient to overthrow the greateſt Empires, gave too large time, and much more than was neceſſary: In as much as a few Hours, nay Minutes, often determine the happineſs of Nations; and as from ſlight and very contemptible beginnings, grievous diviſions have ariſen; ſo out of the Brambles hath fire broke, that hath devour'd the Cedars of *Lebanon*; and there hath been but a moment between the life and death of the greateſt, between Adoration and Oblivion. Since then God doth not give man power to remove the Evil that may befall him, if he could foreſee it; we ought to bleſs him for fitting us to bear each day's affliction

on

on in its due time; by keeping us ignorant of it till it muſt be undergone. For, if any do ſearch into His purpoſes, and attempt to know Futurities, their ſin becomes their punishment. They who conſult Aſtrologers and Diviners, are either deluded with falſe, or ill-grounded hopes, or are tormented with a dread of thoſe miſeries, which they have not the leaſt direction how to eſcape, but are told will inevitably befall them: Like *Saul* at *Endor*, who was confirm'd in the belief of all the evil he fear'd, and had the guilt of his accurſed curioſity added to a fuller knowledg of his diſmal doom. Mind we then what we are called to, leaving the Hiue of Affairs with Wiſdome that is infinite, and with Goodneſs that never fails: and ſo much the rather, becauſe our joys will be higher, when not pall'd by a long foretaſt; and our afflictions when not foreſeen, will not imbitter our preſent comforts. Moreover, as we know that our days, as they may be evil, ſo they may be few; and that each day's trouble may be abundantly heavy; in the midſt of ſuch poſſibilities of dangers, and ſuch calamities which others, as righteous as we, groan under; we have cauſe to praiſe that Providence which keeps off the Evil which by reaſon of our ſins, we may juſtly fear. For to this purpoſe we

may

may be allow'd to be thoughtful of Judgments, that may be pour'd out on us; that by the apprehenſion of them, we may be more livelily ſtirr'd up to glorifie the Mercy which ſuſpends them; and may alſo, by a holy life, move God to continue the bleſſings we enjoy, inſtead of provoking Him by our diſtruſtful thoughts to haſten the calamities we may dread. But if on any other account we take Thought for the Morrow, we may juſtly fear a reproach like that which God made to *Ahaziah*, by the Prophet *Elijah*. *Is it not becauſe there is not a God in Iſrael, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the God of Ekron?* Is it not becauſe there is no God in the World, that you are ſo ſollicitous for what ſhall happen in it? Is it becauſe God hath abandon'd the Helm, that you take His place? Or, becauſe that you want full Employment, therefore you overload the preſent day with the ſupernumerary troubles of after-times? Rather believe, That as there was a Providence before you was born, ſo it will not dye with you; caſt the burden of to Morrow upon Him, who only can, and will take care of it and you: And in ſome meaſure reſemble you the *Iſraelites*, who went out of their Camp and gathered Manna ſufficient for each day, as was commanded,

2 *Kings* i. 3.

manded, not doubting but they ſhould, as was promiſed, find it there the next. Not but that the Scripture requires diligence, in ſubordination to God's Sovereign care; and incourageth the induſtrious Hand and provident Mind. For *Joſeph* laid up ſtores in the City of *Egypt* againſt the years of famine: and the Diſciples hearing of the dearth that ſhould be in the World, did not ſo interpret Chriſt's doctrine, as not to think themſelves bound to ſend relief to the Saints or Brethren at *Jeruſalem*. But too often, as riches increaſe, the heart is more ſet upon them, and leſs upon the Living God: And it is hard to perſwade the wealthy, that *The Life of a man conſiſts not in the abundance of what he poſſeſſeth*. Therefore they provide as if they ſhould live for ever: although they ſee how little truly ſufficeth, and know not how ſoon far leſs may.

*Gen.* xli.

*Acts* xi. 29.

*Luke* xii. 15.

If therefore Chriſtians were fully convinc'd, That their Lives would not laſt for ever; and if they believed That an endleſs ſtate is to follow, they would proportion their thoughts to their Intereſts: a temporary concern ſhould have a tranſitory Care; and an Eternal concern ſhould have their conſtant Care.

And therefore they would be mindful of the Preſent. For though we are forbid to take thought for the Morrow, we are not forbid to take thought for the immediate Day. At firſt view this may ſeem too narrow a compaſs for the large and active Spirit of Man. But if it be ſeriouſly conſidered, it will appear, That as the Evil, ſo the Duty of the Day is ſufficient for it. For who is there that can ſay, as in the preſence of God, that He hath, during that ſhort ſpace, ordered a-right his Thoughts, his Words, and his Deeds? Who hath not offended in ſo few hours? If an ancient Chriſtian found it hard to practiſe one ſhort leſſon that was read to him, out of the *Pſal.* 39. 1. *I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.* If he was a long time before he could fulfil that Precept: Surely then the guiding well the Lips and the Heart and its Imaginations, that are ſet on Evil, will not be an eaſie task to perform, though but for ſo ſhort a time. Our Saviour reproach'd his Diſciples that they could not watch with him one hour: and even, one hour well watch'd, the Eleventh hour ſpent in God's Vineyard, will not be without a reward: The penitent Thief who employed well the laſt Moments of, his Death rather

*Socrat. l. 4. c. 23.*

rather than, Life, was that day with Chriſt in Paradiſe. For God regards the ſincerity of Converſion and Perſeverance after it, and not only the length of time wherein he is ſerv'd. And therefore they are ſure to be bleſſed, who are faithful One Day if it be their Laſt. A Heathen could cry out, that One Day led according to the Precepts of Wiſdom, was to be prefer'd before a ſinning Immortality. How highly then ought Chriſtians to value and employ well One, the Preſent, Day, which ſhall be rewarded with a holy and happy Immortality. And if after humble Adoration of God, and praiſing Him who brings them to the beginning of another day, (which they could not promiſe themſelves,) they ſeriouſly reſolv'd by the aſſiſtance of His Grace religiouſly to ſerve Him that day in their Vocations; and if in the Evening they examin'd themſelves how they had paſt that day, (which may be their laſt,) and found they had walk'd before God in His fear, and as looking to give an account to Him of their deeds; with what comfort might they lay down their heads each night, and wiſh they might wake in Eternity? But when they review but one day's actions, too many will find much cauſe of ſhame and grief; many failings to be confeſt, and much

pardon to be ask'd. And yet, through God's bleſſing on this their inquiry, as they would be more Strict in their Lives, Faithful in their Callings, Charitable in their Cenſures, and Regular in their Devotions: ſo they would find that they had little time to ſpare for unneceſſary Thoughts of the Morrow. Nay, they would then be convinc'd, That this World, in which our ſtay is ſo doubtful, and ſo full of diſappointments, (whoſe joys are ſo falſe and ſo ſhort, and whoſe ſorrows ſo true and ſo laſting,) is not worth their utmoſt ſerioufeſt concern for it; and no way deſerves their being mighty ſollicitous for what ſhall befall them in it: And therefore they would, as Travellers, look tranſiently on what paſt here; having their hearts ſet chiefly on their Country which is above, and on that bleſſed ſtate of Glory that hereafter ſhall be revealed. Since then, we know that we dwell in Tabernacles of Clay, carrying in our Bodies the Sentence of God, and liable to all the Evils that any day hath brought on any diſtreſſed Perſon, Family, or Nation; What is it that they who pretend ſo much to be concern'd for the future, ought to mind, but that Future which ſhall never end; and to provide what will ſurvive the great evil day? All the good things of this Life, however eagerly ſought, hardly

hardly obtain'd, and carefully kept here, muſt be left behind: Onely our good Works; Onely the Fruits of Faith in God, and Conformity to the bleſſed Jeſus; Onely our Charity and participation of the Divine Nature, will accompany us to, and be of uſe at, the Tribunal of Chriſt. Hear we then our Lord teaching us, *while it is called to day*, to ſeek the Kingdom of God, and His Righteouſneſs: and to look on this Life only as a portion of Time aſſign'd us to work out in it our Eternal Salvation. And if mindful of this happy end of a Chriſtian Race, we are ſober and juſt, humble and heavenly-minded; if we conſtantly do each day the duty of the day, as if at night we were to anſwer for it; and live each day as not knowing that any more may be allow'd us; but in it our Lord may come upon us; We ſhall then with mighty aſſurance, (though the Earth be never ſo unquiet, and the Powers of it tremble,) commit to God's guidance our Bodies, Souls, and Spirits, our Country, and His Church; and ſhall find that God will govern all to His Glory, and for our Everlaſting Salvation. To Him Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, Three Perſons, and One God, be Glory and Honour for ever, *Amen.*

*F I N I S.*